

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 7-12, and 23-35 are pending in this application.

Claims 1, 2, 7-12 and 26-35 are allowed.

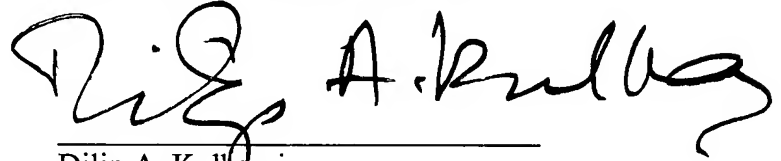
Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 23-25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,768,609 to Washburn ("Washburn") is requested. It is believed that amended independent claim 23, and dependant claims 24 and 25, are patentable over Washburn for the reasons given below.

Regarding claim 23, Washburn does not disclose or suggest "the elongated support member comprising a malleable wire." The examiner asserts that Washburn's fiber optic cable 24 is a "full equivalent" of the "support member" of claim 23. However, Washburn states, at col. 1, line 48, that "[f]iber optic cables are *fragile* in nature." Again, at col. 2, lines 14 and 15, Washburn refers to a "*fragile* optic transmission cable." (*Italics provided.*) Clearly, Washburn's fiber optic cable 24, which is *fragile*, is not "malleable," much less "a malleable wire." Washburn does not disclose or suggest "the support member being manipulatable into a plurality of self-supporting positions by a caregiver and configured to hold such positions such that its distal end is supported in space when its proximal end is supported by the support structure." Washburn's fiber optic cable 24 is not "manipulatable into a plurality of self-supporting positions ..." Any such manipulation of Washburn's fiber optic cable 24 would be against his teaching. Also, Washburn does not disclose or suggest "the line holder having a radially-extending opening for insertion of a line to be held." Instead, as clearly shown in Fig. 2, Washburn's support duct 25, which the examiner considers to be a full equivalent of the "line holder" of claim 23, does not have "a radially-extending opening for insertion of a line to be held." Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 23, and dependent claims 24 and 25, are patentable over Washburn, and hence withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection thereof is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendment and supporting remarks, the subject application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview would expedite the allowance of this application, he is requested to contact the undersigned for a prompt resolution of any outstanding issues.

It is respectfully requested that, if necessary to effect a timely response, this paper be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and shortages and other fees be charged, or any overpayment in fees be credited, to the Account of Barnes & Thornburg, Deposit Account No. 10-0435, with reference to file 7175-74603.

Respectfully submitted,
BARNES & THORNBURG LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dilip A. Kulkarni", written over a horizontal line.

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